

A  
S E R M O N  
P R E A C H E D

At the opening of the Parliament  
of I R E L A N D,  
May 8. 1661.

Before the right Honourable  
the Lords Justices, and the Lords  
Spiritual and Temporal and  
the Commons.

By J E R E M Y Lord Bishop of  
Down and Connor.

*Salus in multitudine consulentium.*

L O N D O N,  
Printed by J. F. for R. Royston, Bookseller to his  
most Sacred M A J E S T Y, 1661.

# SE R M O N

PRELIMINARY

At the opening of the Parliament

of 1844

Before the Right Honourable

the Lord Chancellor and the

Members of the House of Commons

By the Rev. John

and Canon

of the Cathedral Church of

St. Paul, London

Printed by J. G. & Co. 1844



To the Right Honourable, the  
Lords Spiritual and Temporal  
and Commons of Ireland Assembled  
in PARLIAMENT.

My Lords and Gentlemen;

**I** Ought not to dispute your commands for the  
printing my Sermon of Obedience; lest  
my Sermon should be *protestatio contra*  
*factum*: here I know my Example would  
be the best Use to this Doctrine, and I am sure to find  
no inconveniency so great as that of Disobedience; nei-  
ther can I be confident that I am wise in any thing but  
when I obey; for then I have the wisdom of my Supe-  
rior for my warrant, or my excuse. I remember the  
saying of Aurelius the Emperor, *Aequius est me*  
*tot & talium amicorum consilium, quam tor*  
*tales meam unius voluntatem sequi.* I could easily  
have pretended excuses, but that day I had taught others  
the contrary; and I would not shed that Chalice which

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*my own hands had newly filled with waters issuing from the fountains of Salvation.*

*My eyes are almost grown old with seeing the horrid mischiefs which came from Rebellion and Disobedience; and I would willingly now be blessed with observation of Peace and Righteousness, Plenty and Religion, which do already, and I hope shall for ever, attend upon Obedience to the best KING and the best CHURCH in the world. I see no objection against my hopes, but that which ought least of all in this case to be pretended. Men pretend Conscience against Obedience; expressly against Saint Paul's Doctrine, teaching us to obey for conscience sake; but to disobey for Conscience in a thing indifferent, is never to be found in the books of our Religion.*

*It is very hard when the Prince is forc'd to say to his rebellious Subject, as God did to his stubborn people, Quid faciam tibi? I have tried all the waies I can to bring thee home, and what shall I now doe unto thee? The Subject should rather say, Quid me vis facere? What wilt thou have me to doe? This Question is the best end of disputations. Corruptitur atque dissolvitur Imperantis officium, si quis ad id quod facere iussus est, non obsequio debito, sed consilio non considerato respondeat, said one in A. Gellius. When a Subject is commanded to obey, and  
be*



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he disputes, and saies, Nay, but the other is better, he is like a servant that gives his Master necessary counsel, when he requires of him a necessary obedience. *Utilius parere edicto quam efferre consilium*, he had better obey then give counsel: by how much it is better to be profitable then to be witty, to be full of goodness rather then full of talk and argument.

But all this is acknowledged true in strong men, but not in the weak; in vigorous, but not in tender Consciences: for Obedience is strong meat, and will not down with weak stomachs. As if in the world any thing were easier then to obey: for we see that the food of Children is milk and lawes; the breast-milk of their Nurses and the commands of their Parents is all that food and Government by which they are kept from harm and hunger, and conducted to life and wisdom. And therefore they that are weak brethren, of all things in the world have the least reason to pretend an excuse for disobedience, for nothing can secure them but the wisdom of the Laws: for they are like Children in minority; they cannot be trusted to their own conduct, and therefore must live at the publick charge, and the wisdom of their Superiors is their guide and their security. And this was wisely advised by S. Paul, Him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtfull disputations: that's not the way for him; Children must

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must not dispute with their Fathers and their Masters. If old men will dispute, let them look to it; that's meat for the strong indeed, though it be not very nutritive: but the Laws and the Counsels, the Exhortations and the Doctrines of our Spiritual Rulers, are the measures by which God hath appointed Babes in Christ to become Men, and the weak to become strong; and they that are not to be received to doubtful disputations, are to be received with the arms of love into the imbraces of a certain and regular Obedience.

But it would be considered, that Tenderness of Conscience is an equivocal terme, and does not alwaies signifie in a good sense. For a Child is of a tender flesh; but he whose foot is out of joint, or hath a bile in his arme, or hath strained a sinew, is much more tender. The tenderness of age is that weakness that is in the ignorant and the new beginners: the tenderness of a bile, that is soreness indeed rather then tenderness, is of the diseased, the abused, and the mis-perswaded. The first indeed are to be tenderly dealt with, and have usages accordingly: but that is the same I have already told; you must teach them, you must command them, you must guide them, you must chuse for them, you must be their guardians, and they must comport themselves accordingly. But for that tenderness of Conscience which is the disease and soreness of Conscience, it  
must

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must be cured by anodynes and soft usages, unless they prove ineffective, and that the Launcet be necessary. But there are amongst us such tender stomachs; that cannot endure Milk, but can very well digest Iron; Consciences so tender, that a Ceremony is greatly offensive, but Rebellion is not; a Surplice drives them away as a bird affrighted with a man of clouts, but their Consciences can suffer them to despise Government, and speak evil of Dignities, and curse all that are not of their Opinion, and disturb the peace of Kingdomes, and commit Sacrilege, and account Schisme the character of Saints. The true Tenderneſs of Conscience is 1. that which is impatient of a sin; 2<sup>ly</sup>, it will not endure any thing that looks like it; and 3<sup>ly</sup>, it will not give offence. Now since all Sin is Disobedience, 1. it will be rarely contingent that a man in a Christian Common-wealth shall be tied to disobey, to avoid sin: and certain it is, if such a case could happen, yet 2<sup>ly</sup>, nothing of our present questions is so like a sin, as when we refuse to obey the Laws; to stand in a clean Vestment is not so ill a sight as to see men stand in separation, and to kneel at the Communion is not so like Idolatry as Rebellion is to Witchcraft: and then 3<sup>ly</sup>, for the matter of giving offences, what scandal is greater then that which scandalizes the Laws? and who is so carefully to be observed, lest he be offended, as the KING? And if that

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which offends the weak brother is to be avoided, much more that which offends the strong; for this is certainly really criminal, but for the other it is much odder but it is mistaken. And when the case is so put, between the obedient and the disobedient, which shall be offended, and one will, I suppose there is no question but the Laws will take more care of Subjects than of Rebels, and not weaken them in their duty in compliance with those that hate the Laws, and will not endure the Government.

And after all this, in the conduct of Government what remedy can there be to those that call themselves Tender Consciences? I shall not need say that every man can easily pretend it; for we have seen the vilest part of mankind, men that have done things so horrid, worse then which the Sun never saw, yet pretend tender Consciences against Ecclesiastical Laws: but I will suppose that they are really such, that they in the simplicity of their hearts follow Absalom, and in weakness hide their heads in little Conventicles and places of separation for a trifle; what would they have done for themselves?

If you make a Law of Order, and in the sanction put a clause of favour for tender Consciences, do not you invite every Subject to Disobedience by impunity, and teach him how to make his own excuse? is not such a Law, a Law without an obligation? may not every man abuse whether he will obey or no? and if he pretends to  
disobey



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disobey out of Conscience, is not he that disobeyes equally innocent with the obedient; altogether as just, as not having done any thing without leave, and yet much more Religious and conscientious? Quicunque vult is but an ill preface to a Law; and it is a strange obligation that makes no difference between him that obeyes and him that refuses to obey.

But what course must be taken with tender Consciences? Shall the execution of the Law be suspended as to all such persons? that will be all one with the former: for if the execution be commanded to be suspended, then the obligation of the Law by command is taken away, and then it were better there were no Law made. And indeed that is the pretension, that is the secret of the business; they suppose the best way to prevent Disobedience is to take away all Laws. It is a short way indeed; there shall then be no Disobedience, but at the same time there shall be no Government: but the Remedy is worse then the Disease; and to take away all Wine and strong drink to prevent Drunkenness would not be half so great a folly.

I cannot therefore tell what to advise in this particular, but that every Spiritual guide should consider who are tender Consciences and who are weak brethren, and use all the waies of piety and prudence to instruct and to inform them, that they may increase in knowledge



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and spiritual understanding. But they that will be alwaies learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth, they that will be children of a hundred years old and never come to years of discretion, they are very unfit to guide others, and to be Curates of Souls : but they are most unfit to reprove the Laws, and speak against the wisdom of a Nation, when it is confessed that they are so weak, that they understand not the fundamental Liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, but are servants to a scruple, and affrighted at a circumstance, and in bondage under an indifferent thing, and so much Idolaters of their Se<sup>t</sup> or Opinion as to prefer it before all their own nobler Interests, and the Charity of their brother, and the Peace of a whole Church and Nation.

To you, my Lords and Gentlemen, I hope I may say as Marcus Curius said to a stubborn young man, Non opus Vos habere cive qui parere nesciret; the Kingdome hath no need of those that know not how to obey. But as for them who have weak and tender Consciences, they are in the state of Childhood and minority: but then you know that a Child is never happy by having his own humor: if you chuse for him, and make him to use it, he hath but one thing to doe; but if you put him to please himself, he is troubled with every thing, and satisfied with nothing. We find that all Christian Churches

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Churches kept this Rule. They kept themselves and others close to the rule of Faith, and peaceably suffered one another to differ in Ceremonies, but suffered no difference amongst their own: they gave Liberty to other Churches, and gave Laws, and no Liberty, to their own Subjects. And at this day the Churches of Geneva, France, Switzerland, Germany, Low Countries, tie all their people to their own Laws, but tie up no mans Conscience; if he be not perswaded as they are, let him charitably dissent, and leave that Government, and adbere to his own Communion. If you be not of their mind, they will be served by them that are: they will not trouble your Conscience, and you shall not disturb their Government. But when men think they cannot enjoy their Conscience unless you give them good Livings, and if you prefer them not, you afflict their Consciences, they do but too evidently declare that it is not their Consciences but their Profits they would have secured. Now to these I have only this to say, That their Conscience is to be enjoyed by the measures of God's Word, but the Rule for their Estates is the Laws of the Kingdome: and I shew you yet a more excellent way; Obedience is the best security for both; because this is the best conservatory of Charity and Truth and Peace. Si vis brevi perfectus esse, esto obediens etiam in minimis, was the saying of

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a Saint; and the world uses to look for Miracles from them whom they shall esteem Saints: but I had rather see a man truly humble and obedient, then to see him raise a man from the dead, said old Pachomius.

But to conclude: if weak brethren shall still plead for Toleration and Compliance, I hope my Lords the Bishops will consider where it can doe good and doe no harm, where they are permitted, and where themselves are bound up by the Laws, and in all things where it is safe and holy to labour to bring them ease and to give them remedy: but to think of removing the Disease by feeding the Humor, I confess it is a strange cure to our present Distempers. He that took clay and spittle to open the blind eyes can make any thing be collyrium; but he alone can doe it. But whether any humane power can bring good from so unlikely an instrument, if any man desires yet to be better informed, I desire him, besides the calling to mind the late sad effects of Schisme, to remember that no Church in Christendome ever did it. It is neither the way of Peace nor Government, nor yet a proper remedy for the cure of a weak Conscience.

I shall therefore pray to God that these men who separate in simplicity may by God's mercy be brought to understand their own Liberty, and that they may not for ever be babes and Neophytes, and wax old in trifles,

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fler, and for ever stay at entrances and outside of Religion; but that they would pass in interiora domus, and seek after Peace and Righteousness, Holiness and Justice, the love of God and Evangelical perfecti-  
ons; and then they will understand how ill-advised they are who think Religion consists in zeal against Ceremo-  
nies and speaking evil of the Laws.

My Lords and Gentlemen, what I said in pursuance of publick Peace and private Duty, and some little inci-  
dences to both, I now humbly present to you, more to shew my own Obedience then to re-mind you of your Duty, which hitherto you have so well observed in your amicable and sweet concord of counsels and affections, during this present Session. I owe many thanks to you who heard me patiently, willingly and kindly; I endeavoured to please God, and I find I did not displease you: but he is the best hearer of a Sermon who first loves the Doctrine, and then praetisises it; and that you have hitherto done, very piously and very prosperously. I pray God continue to direct your Counsels so that you in all things may please him, and in all things be blessed by him, that all generations may call you blessed Instruments of a lasting Peace, the restorers of the old paths, the Patrons of the Church, friends of Religion, and Subjects fitted for your Prince, who is Just up to the greatest example, and Merciful beyond all examples,

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*examples, a Prince who hath been nourished, and preserved, and restored, and blessed by Miracles; a Prince whose Vertues and Fortunes are equally the greatest.*

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## I. SAMUEL

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1 SAMUEL 15. latter part of the 22<sup>th</sup> verse.

*Behold to obey is better then sacrifice, and  
to hearken then the fat of rams.*

First part of the 23<sup>th</sup>.

*For Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,  
and stubbornness is as iniquity and  
idolatry.*

**I**N the world nothing is more easy  
then to say our Prayers, and to  
obey our Superiors; and yet in  
the world there is nothing to  
which we are so unwilling as to  
Prayer, and nothing seems so intolerable as  
Obedience: for men esteem all Laws to be  
fetters, and their Superiors are their enemies:  
and when a command is given, we turn into  
all shapes of excuse to escape from the imposi-

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tion :

tion : For either the authority is incompetent, or the law it self is *Statutum non bonum*, or it is impossible to be kept, or at least very inconvenient, and we are to be reliev'd in equity, or there is a secret dispensation, and it does not bind in my particular case, or not now; or it is but the law of a man, and was made for a certain end; or it does not bind the conscience, but 'twas only for Political regards; or, if the worst happen, I will obey passively, and then I am innocent. Thus every man snuffes up the wind, like *the wild asses in the wildernes*, and thinks that Authority is an ineroachment upon a mans birth-right; and in the mean time never considers that Christ took upon him our Nature that he might learn us Obedience, and in that also make us become like unto God. In his Justice and his Mércy he was imitable before; but before the Incarnation of Christ we could not in passive graces imitate God who was impassible. But he was pleased at a great rate to set forward this duty; and when himself became obedient in the hardest point, *obediens usque ad mortem*, and is now become to us *the author and finisher of our Obedience*, as well as of our Faith,  
*admonetur*

*admonetur omnis etas fieri posse quod aliquando factum est.* We must needs confels it very possible to obey the severest of the divine laws, even to dye if God commands, because it was already done by a man; and we must needs confels it excellent, because it was done by God himself.

But this great Example is of universal influence in the whole matter of Obedience. For that I may speak of that part of this Duty which can be useful, and concerns us; Men do not deny but they must obey in all Civil things, but in Religion they have a Supreme, *God only*, and Conscience is his interpreter; and in effect every man must be the Judge whether he shall obey or no. Therefore it is that I say, the Example of our Lord is the great determination of this inquiry: for he did obey and suffer, according to the commands of his Superiors under whose Government he was placed; he gave *his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to the nippers*; he kept the orders of the Rulers, and the customes of the Synagogues, the Law of *Moses* and the rights of the Temple; and by so doing *he fulfilled all righteousness*. Christ made no distinctions in

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his

his Obedience, but obeyed God in *all things*, and those that God set over him in *all things according to God*, and in things of Religion most of all; because to obey was of it self a great instance of Religion, and if ever Religion comes to be pretended against Obedience in any thing where our Superior can command, it is imposture: For that is the purpose of my text, *Obedience is better then Sacrifice*. Our own judgment, our own opinion is the sacrifice, seldome fit to be offered to God, but most commonly deserving to be consumed by fire: but take it at the best, it is not half so good as *Obedience*; for *that* was indeed *Christ's Sacrifice*, and (as *David* said of *Goliath's sword*, *non est alter talis*) there is no other sacrifice that can be half so good: and when *Abraham* had lifted up his sacrificing knife to slay his Son, and so express'd his obedience, God would have no more; he had the Obedience, and he cared not for the Sacrifice.

By *Sacrifice* here then is meant the external and contingent actions of Religion; by *Obedience* is meant submission to Authority, and observing the command. *Obedience* is a not chusing our Duty, a not disputing with our  
 Betters,

Betters, not to argue, not to delay, not to murmur ; it is not this, but it is much better, for it is *Love*, and *Simplicity*, and *Humility*, and *Usefulness*, and I think these do *reductively* contain all that is excellent in the whole conjugation of Christian Graces.

My Text is a perfect Proposition, and hath no special remark in the words of it ; but is only a great representation of the most useful Truth to all Kingdomes and Parliaments and Councils and Authorities in the whole world: It is your Charter, and the Sanction of your authority, and the stabiliment of your Peace, and the honour of your Laws, and the great defence of your Religion, and the building up and the guarding of the Kings Throne. It is that by which all the Societies in heaven and earth are firm: without this you cannot have a Village prosperous, or a Ship arrive in harbour. It is that which God hath bound upon us by hope and fear, by wrath and conscience, by duty and necessity. Obedience is the formality of all Vertues, and every Sin is Disobedience. There can no greater thing be said, unless you please to adde, that we never read that the earth opened and swallowed up  
any;



any man alive, but a company of rebellious disobedient people, who rose up against *Moses* and *Aaron*, the Prince of the People, and the Priest of God. For Obedience is the most necessary thing in the world, and *corruptio optimi est pessima*: Disobedience is the greatest evil in the world, and that alone which can destroy it.

*Nulum  
malum ma-  
jus aut in-  
feliciter  
feracius  
quam ino-  
bedientia.  
Seneca.*

My text is instanced in the matter of Obedience to God; but yet the case is so, that though I shall in the first place discourse of our Obedience to man, I shall not set one foot aside from the main intention of it; because Obedience to our Superiors is really and is accounted to be Obedience to God, for they are sent by God, they are his vicegerents, his Ministers, and his Embassadors. *Apostolus cujusque est quisque* say the Jewes, Every mans Apostle is himself; and *be that beareth or despiseth you*, said Christ, *beareth or despiseth me*: And the reason is very evident, because it is not to be expected that God should speak to us by himself, but sometimes by Angels, sometimes by Prophets, once by his Son, and alwaies by his Servants.

Now I desire two things to be observed.

First,

First, We may as well perceive that God speaks to us when he uses the ministry of men as when he uses the ministry of Angels : one is as much declared and as certain as the other. And if it be said, a man may pretend to come from God, and yet deliver nothing but his own errand ; that is no strange thing : but remember also that S. *Paul* puts this supposition in the case of an Angel, [*If an Angel preach any other Gospel ;*] and we know that many Angels come like Angels of light, who yet teach nothing but the waies of Darkness. So that we are still as much bound to obey our Superior as to obey an Angel : a man is *paullò minor angelis*, a little lower then the Angels ; but *we* are much lower then the King. Consider then with what fear and love we should receive an Angel, and so let us receive all those whom God hath sent to us, and set over us ; for they are no less : less indeed in their Persons, but not in their Authorities. Nay the case is nearer yet ; for we are not only bound to receive God's Deputies as God's Angel, but as God himself. For it is the power of God in the hand of a man, and *he that resists, resists God's ordinance*. And I pray remember that

that there is not only no power greater then God's, but there is no other; for all Power is his. The consequent of this is plain enough; I need say no more of it: It is all one to us who commands, God, or God's Vicegerent. This was the first thing to be observed.

Secondly, there can be but two things in the world requir'd to make Obedience necessary, the greatness of the Authority, and the worthiness of the Thing. In the first you see the case can have no difference, because the thing it self is but one. There is but one Authority in the world, and that is God's: as there is but one Sun whose light is diffused into all Kingdomes. But is there not great difference in the Thing commanded? Yes certainly, there is some; but nothing to warrant disobedience: for whatever the thing be, it may be commanded by man, if it be not countermanded by God. For

I. *It is not required that every thing commanded should of it self be necessary; for God himself oftentimes commands things which have in them no other excellency then that of Obedience. What made Abraham the friend of God? and what made his offer to kill his Son to be*  
so

so pleasing to God? It had been naturally no very great good to cut the throat of a little child; but only that it was Obedience. What excellency was there in the journeys of the Patriarchs from *Mesopotamia* to *Syria*, from the land of *Canaan* into *Egypt*? and what thanks could the sons of *Israel* deserve that they sate still upon the seventh day of the week? and how can a man be dearer unto God by keeping of a Feast, or building of a Booth, or going to *Jerusalem*, or cutting off the foreskin of a boy, or washing their hands and garments in fair water? There was nothing in these things but the Obedience. And when our blessed Lord himself came to his Servant to take of him the Baptisme of Repentance, alas, he could take nothing but the water and the ceremony: for, as *Tertullian* observes, he was *nullius pœnitentiæ debitor*, he was indeed a just person and needed no repentance; but even so it became him to fulfil all righteousness: but yet even then it was that the Holy Spirit did descend upon his holy head, and crown'd that Obedience, though it were but to a ceremony. Obedience, you see, may be necessary when the law is not so. For in these cases, God's Son and God's Servants did obey

in things which were made good only by the commandment: and if we doe so in the instances of humane Laws, there is nothing to be said against it, but that what was not of it self necessary, is made so by the authority of the Commander and the force of the Commandement. But there is more in it then so. For,

2<sup>ly</sup>, We pretend to be willing to obey even in things *naturally not necessary*, if a divine command does interpose; but if it be only a commandement of man, and the thing be not necessary of it self, then we desire to be excus'd. But will we doe nothing else? We our selves will doe many things that God hath not commanded, and may not our Superiors command us in many cases to doe what we may lawfully doe without a commandement? Can we become a law unto our selves, and cannot the word and power of our Superiors also become a law unto us? hath God given more to a private then to a publick hand? But consider the ill consequents of this fond opinion. Are all the practices of Geneva or Scotland recorded in the Word of God? are the trifling Ceremonies of their publick Penance recorded in the four Gospels? are all the rules of decency, and



and all things that are of good report, and all the measures of prudence, and the laws of peace and war, and the customs of the Churches of God, and the lines of publick honesty, are all these described to us by the laws of God? If they be, let us see and read them, that we may have an end to all questions and minute cases of Conscience: but if they be not, and yet by the Word of God these are bound upon us in the general, and no otherwise; then it follows that the particulars of all these, which *may be* infinite, and *are* innumerable, yet may be the matter of humane Laws; and then are bound upon us by the power of God put into the hands of man. The consequent is this, that whatsoever is commanded by our Superior according to the will of God, or whatsoever is not against it, is of necessity to be obey'd.

3<sup>ly</sup>; But what if our Princes or our Prelates command things against the Word of God? what then? Why nothing then, but that we must obey God and not man; there's no dispute of that. But what then again? Why therefore saies the Papist I will not obey the Protestant Kings, because against the Word of God they command me to come to Church

where Heresy is preached; and I will not acknowledge the Bishops, saith the Presbyterian, because they are against the discipline and scepter of *Jesus* Christ; and the Independent hates Parochial meetings, and is wholly for a gathered Church, and supposes this to be the practice Apostolical; and I will not bring my Child to Baptisme, (saith the Anabaptist) because God calls none but believers to that Sacrament; and I will acknowledge no Clergy, no Lord, no Master, saith the Quaker, because Christ commands us to *call no man master on the earth, and be not called of men Rabbi*. And if you call upon these men to obey the Authority God hath set over them, they tell you with one voice, with all their hearts, as far as the Word of God will give them leave; but God is to be obey'd, and not man: and therefore if you put the Laws in execution against them, they will obey you passively, because you are stronger, and so long as they know it they will not stir against you; but they in the mean time are little less then Martyrs, and you no better then Persecutors.

What

What shall we doe now? for here is evidently a great heap of disorder: they all confesse that authority must be obey'd; but when you come to the trial, none of them all will doe it, and they think they are not bound: but because their Opinions being contrary cannot all be right, and it may be none of them are, it is certain that all this while Authority is infinitely wronged and prejudiced amongst them, when all fantastick Opinions shall be accounted a sufficient reason to despise it. I hope the Presbyterian will joyn with the Protestant, and say that the Papist, and the Socinian, and the Independent, and the Anabaptist, and the Quaker are guilty of Rebellion and Disobedience for all their pretence of the Word of God to be on their side: and I am more sure that all these will joyn with the Protestant, and say that the Presbyterian hath no reason to disobey Authority upon pretence of their new Government concerning which they do but *dream dreams*, when they think *they see visions*. Certain it is that the biggest part of dissenters in the whole world are criminally disobedient; and it is a

thousand to one but that Authority is in the right against them, and ought to be obey'd. It remains now in the next place, that we inquire what Authority is to doe in this case, and what these Sectaries and Recusants are to doe; for these are two things worth inquiry.

1. Concerning Authority. All disagreeing persons, to cover their foul shame of Rebellion or Disobedience, pretend Conscience for their Judge, and the Scripture for their Law. Now if these men think that by this means they proceed safely, upon the same ground the Superior may doe what he thinks to be his duty, and be at least as safe as they. If the Rebellious Subject can think that by God's Law he ought not to obey; the Princee may at the same time think that by God's Law he ought to punish him: and it is as certain that he is justly punished, as he thinks it certain he reasonably disobeyes. Or is the Conscience of the Superior bound to relaxe his lawes, if the inferior tells him so? Can the Prince give Lawes to the peoples will; and can the people give measures to the Princes understanding? If any one of the people can prescribe or make it necessary to change the Law, then

then every one can, and by this time every new Opinion will introduce a new Law, and that Law shall be obey'd by him only that hath a mind to it, and that will be a strange Law that binds a man only to doe his own pleasure. But because the King's Conscience is to him as sure a Rule as the Conscience of any disobedient Subject can be to himself, the Prince is as much bound to doe his duty in Government, as the other can be to follow his Conscience in disagreeing; and the consequent will be, that whether the Subject be right or wrong in the dispute, it is certain he hath the just reward of Disobedience in the conclusion. If one mans Conscience can be the measure of another mans action, why shall not the Princes Conscience be the Subject's measure? but if it cannot, then the Prince is not to depart from his own Conscience, but proceed according to the Laws which he judges just and reasonable.

2. The Superior is tied by the laws of Christian Charity so far to bend in the ministration of his Laws, as to pity the invincible Ignorance and Weakness of his abused people, *qui devoratur à malis Pastoribus*, (as S. Hieronim's expression



expresſion is ) that are devour'd by their evil Shepheards: but this is to laſt no longer then till the Ignorance can be cured, and the man be taught his duty ; for whatſoever comes after this looks ſo like Obſtinacy, that no Laws in the world judge it to be any thing elſe. And then ſecondly, this alſo is to be underſtood to be the duty of Superiors only in matters of mere Opinion, not relating to Practice. For no mans Opinion muſt be ſuffer'd to doe miſchief, to diſturb the Peace, to diſhonour the Government : not only becauſe every diſagreeing perſon can to ſerve his end pretend his Conſcience, and ſo claim impunity for his Villany ; but alſo becauſe thoſe things which concern the good of mankind and the Peace of Kingdomes are ſo plainly taught, that no man who thinks himſelf ſo wiſe as to be fit to oppoſe Authority, can be ſo fooliſh as in theſe things not to know his Duty. In other things, if the Opinion does neither bite nor ſcratch, if it dwells at home in the houſe of underſtanding, and wanders not into the out-houſes of Paſſion and popular orations, the Superior impoſes no laws, and exacts no obedience, and deſtroies no liberty,

liberty, and gives no restraint. This is the part of Authority.

2. The next enquiry is, What must the disagreeing Subject doe when he supposes the Superiors command is against the Law of God? I answer that if he thinks so, and thinks true, he must not obey his Superior in that : but because most men that think so think amiss, there are many particulars fit by such persons to be consider'd.

1. Let such men think charitably of others, and that all are not fools or mad-men who are not of the same Opinion with themselves or their own little party. 2. Let him think himself as fallible and subject to mistake as other men are. 3. But let him by no means think that every Opinion of his is an Inspiration from God ; for that is the pride and madness of a pretended Religion : such a man is to be cured by Physick ; for he could not enter *into that* persuasion by Reason or Experience, and therefore it must enter *into him* by folly or the anger of God. 4. From hence it will naturally follow, that he ought to think his Opinion to be uncertain, and that he ought not to behave himself like the man that is too confident;

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but because his Obedience is Duty, and his Duty certain, he will find it more wise and safe and holy to leave that which is disputable, and pursue that which is demonstrable; to change his uncertain Opinion for his certain Duty. For it is twenty to one but he is deceived in his Opinion; but if he be, it is certain that whatsoever his Conscience be, yet in his separation from Authority he is a sinner.

2. Every man who by his Opinion is engaged against Authority, should doe well to study his doubtful Opinion less, and Humility and Obedience more. But you say, that this concerns not me, for my disagreeing is not in a doubtful matter, but I am sure I am in the right; there is no *ifs* and *ands* in my case. Well, it may be so: but were it not better that you did doubt? *A wise man feareth (saith Solomon) and departeth from evil; but a fool rageth and is confident:* and the difference between a Learned man and a Novice is this, that the yong fellow crieth out, I am sure it is so; the better learned answers, *ἴσως ἢ τοῦτο*, possibly it may, and peradventure it is so, but I pray enquire: and he is the best Diviner, *ἡ ἀλήθεια ἀποκαλύπτει τὰ κρυφά*, he is the best Judge

Judge that conjectures best, not he that is most confident; for, as *Xenophanes* said wisely, *Man does but conjecture, but God only knows*; and it is no disparagement to a wise man to learn, and by suspecting the fallibility of things and his own aptness to mistake, to walk prudently and safely, with an eye to God, and an ear open to his Superior. Some men are drunk with fancy, and mad with Opinion. Who believe more strongly then boyes and women? who are so hard to be perswaded as fools? and who so readily suspect their teachers as they who are govern'd by chance, and know not the intrinsick measures of good and evil? *Qui pauca considerat de facili pronunciat*; it is a little learning and not enough that makes men conclude hastily, and clap fast hold on the Conclusion before they have well weighed the Premisses: but Experience and Humility would teach us Modesty and Fear.

3. In all disputes he that obeys his Superior can never be a *Heretick* in the estimate of Law, and he can never be a *Schismatick* in the point of Conscience; so that he certainly avoids one great death, and very probably the other. *Res judicata pro veritate accipitur*, saith the Law; If the

Judge have given sentence, that sentence is suppos'd a truth: and *Cassiodor* said according to the sentence of the Law, *Nimis iniquum est ut ille patiatur dispendium, qui imperium fecit alienum.* Our Obedience secures us from the imputation of evil, and Error does but seldome goe in company with Obedience. But however there is this advantage to be gotten by *Obedience*; that he who prefers the sentence of the Law before his own Opinion does doe an act of great Humility, and exercises the grace of Modesty, and takes the best way to secure his Conscience and the publick Peace, and pleases the Government which he is bound to please, and pursues the excellencies of Unity, and promotes Charity and Godly Love: whereas on the other side, he that goes by himself apart from his Superior is alwaies materially a Schismatick, and is more likely to be deceiv'd by his own Singularity and Prejudice and Weakness, then by following the guides God hath set over him. And if he loses Truth, certainly he will get nothing else: for by so doing we lose our Peace too, and give publick offence, and arme Authority against us, and are scandalous in Law, and pull



pull evil upon our heads; and all this for a proud Singularity, or a trifling Opinion, in which we are not so likely to be deceived, if we trust our selves less, and the publick more. *In omnibus falli possum, in obedientia non possum,* said S. Teresa, I can in every thing else, but in Obedience I can never be deceived. And it is very remarkable in my Text, that Rebellion or Disobedience is compared to *the sin of witchcraft*. Indeed it seems strange, for the meaning of it is not only that a Rebel is as much hated by God as a Witch, but it means that the finnes are alike in their very natures: *quasi peccatum divinationis* (saith the Vulgar Latine) they that disobey Authority, trusting in their own opinions, are but like Witches or Diviners; that is, they are led by an evil spirit; pride and a lying and deceiving spirit is their teacher, and their answers are seldome true; for though they pretend the Truth of God for their Disobedience, yet *they fall into the deception of the devil*, and that's the end of their soothsaying. And let me adde this, that when a man distrusts his Superior and trusts himself, if he misses Truth, it will be greatly imputed to him; he shall feel the evil of his error

and the shame of his pride, the reproach of his folly and the punishment of his disobedience, the dishonour of singularity, and the restlessness of Schisme, and the scorn of the multitude : but on the other side, if he obey Authority, and yet be deceived, he is greatly excused, he erred on the safer side, he is defended by the hands of many vertues, and gets peace and love of the Congregation.

You see the Blessings of Obedience, even in the questions and matters of Religion : but I have something more to say, and it is not only of great use to appease the tumultuary disputations and arguings of Religion which have lately disturbed these Nations, but is proper to be spoken to, and to be reduced to practice by this Honourable and High Court of Parliament.

That which I am to say is this ; You have no other way of Peace, no better way to appease and quiet the Quarrels in Religion which have been too long among us, but by reducing all men to Obedience, and all questions to the measures of the Laws. For they on both sides pretend Scripture, but one side onely can pretend to the Laws : and they that  
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do admit no authority above their own to expound Scripture, cannot deny but Kings and Parliaments are the makers and proper expounders of our Laws; and if ever you mean to have *Truth and Peace kiss each other*, let no man dispute against your Laws. For did not our Blessed Saviour say, that an Oath is the end of all questions, and after depositions are taken, all Judges goe to sentence? What Oaths are to private questions, that Laws are to publick. And if it be said that Laws may be mistaken; it is true, but may not an Oath also be a Perjury? and yet because in humane affairs we have no greater certainty, and greater then God gives we may not look for, let the Laws be the last determination; and in wise and religious Governments no disputation is to goe beyond them.

2. But this is not onely true in religious prudence and plain necessary, but this is the way that God hath appointed, and that he hath blessed, and that he hath intended to be the means of ending all questions. This we learn from *S. Paul*, *I exhort that first of all prayers,* 1. Tim. 2. 1. *and supplications, and intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: for Kings and for all*  
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*that are in Authority.* For all; for Parliaments and for Councils, for Bishops and for Magistrates : it is for all, and for Kings above all. Well, to what purpose is all this ? *that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* Mark that : Kings and all that are in Authority are by God appointed to be the means of obtaining unity and peace in Godliness, *ἡ εὐσεβεία*, in all the true and Godly worshippings of God ; no Unity in Religion without Kings and Bishops and those that are in Authority.

3. And indeed because this is God's way of ending our Controversies, the matter of Authority is highly to be regarded. If you suffer the Authority of the King to be lessened, to be scrupled, to be denied in Ecclesiastical affairs, you have no way left to silence the tongues and hands of gainsaying people. But so it is, the Kings Authority is appointed and enabled by God to end our questions of Religion : *Divinatio in labiis Regis* (saith Solomon) *in judicio non errabit os ejus*, Divination and a wise sentence is in the lips of the King, and his mouth shall not erre in judgement. In all Scripture there is not so much for the Popes infal-

infallibility, but by this it appears there is  
 divinity in the Kings sentence: for God gives  
 to Kings, who are his Vicegerents, a peculiar  
 spirit. And when *Justinian* had out of the sense  
 of *Julian* the Lawyer observed that there were  
 many cases for which Law made no provi-  
 sion, he addes, *If any such shall happen, Augustum*  
*imploretur remedium*, run to the King for remedy;  
 for therefore God hath set the Imperial fortune over  
 humane affairs, *ut possit omnia quæ noviter contin-*  
*gunt & emendare & componere, & modis ac regu-*  
*lis competentibus tradere*, that the King may  
 amend and rule and compose every new-ari-  
 sing question. And it is not to be despised,  
 but is a great indication of this Truth, that the  
 Answers of the Roman Princes and Judges  
 recorded in the Civil Law are such that all  
 Nations of the world do approve them, and  
 are a great testimony how the sentences of  
 Kings ought to be valued, even in matters of  
 Religion, and questions of greatest doubt.  
*Bona conscientia Scyphus est Josephi*, said the old  
 Abbot of Kells; a good Conscience is like Jo-  
 seph's Cup, in which our Lord the King di-  
 vines. And since God hath blessed us with so  
 good, so just, so religious and so wise a Prince,

L. 8. cod.  
 de veteri  
 jure enu-  
 cleando.

Petrus Cel-  
 lensis lib.  
 de Consci-  
 entia.



let the sentence of his Laws be our last resort, and no questions be permitted after his judgment and legal determination. For Wisedome saith, *By me Princes rule, by me they decree justice*: and therefore the spirit of the King is a divine eminency, and is as the spirit of the most High God.

4. Let no man be too busy in disputing the laws of his Superiors, for a man by that seldome gets good to himself, but seldome misses to doe mischief unto others. *μὴ ἐριζε γονεῦσι καὶ δίκαια λόγῃς*, said one in *Laertius*. Will a son contend with his father? that's not decent, though the son speak that which is right: he may possibly say well enough, but he does doe very ill; not only because he does not pay his duty and reverential fear, but because it is in it self very often unreasonable to dispute concerning the command of our Superior, whether it be good or no; for the very commandment can make it not only good, but a necessary good. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay on you no greater burden then these necessary things*, said the Council of Jerusalem: and yet these things were not necessary, but as they were commanded: to abstain  
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from a strangled hen or a bloody pudding could not of themselves be necessary; but the commandement came, authority did interpose, and then they were made so.

5. But then besides the advantages both of the spirit, and the authority of Kings in matters of question, the laws and decrees of a National Church ought upon the account of their own advantages be esteem'd as a final sentence in all things disputed. The thing is a plain command *Hebrews 13. 7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: this tels what Rulers he means; Rulers Ecclesiastical: and what of them? whose faith follow; they must praire in articulis; they are not masters of your faith, but guides of it: and they that sit in Moses chair must be heard and obey'd, said our blessed Saviour. These words were not said for nothing; and they were nothing if their authority were nothing.*

For between the laws of a Church and the opinion of a Subject the comparison is the same as between a publick spirit and a private. The publick is far the better, the daughter of God, and the mother of a blessing,

and alwaies dwels in light. The publick spirit hath already passed the trial, it hath been subjected to the Prophets, tried and searched and approved; the private is yet to be examined. The publick spirit is uniform and apt to be followed; the private is various and multi-form as chance, and no man can follow him that hath it. For if he follows one, he is re-proved by a thousand; and if he changes, he may get a shame, but no truth: and he can never rest but in the arms and conduct of his Superior. When *Aaron* and *Miriam* murmured against *Moses*, God told them that they were Prophets of an inferior rank then *Moses* was. God communicated himself to them in dreams and visions; but the *Ruah hakkodesh*, the publick spirit of *Moses* their Prince, that was higher: and what then? wherefore then (God said) were ye not afraid to speak against my servant *Moses*? plainly teaching us, that where there is a more excellent spirit, they that have a spirit less excellent ought to be afraid to speak against it. And this is the full case of the private and publick spirit; that is, of a Subject speaking against the spirit and the laws of the Church. In heaven, and in the air,  
and

רוח  
הקודש

NUM. 12.  
6, 7, 8.

and in all the regions of spirits, the spirit of a lower order dares not speak against the spirit of an higher; and therefore for a private spirit to oppose the publick, is a disorder greater then is in hell it self.

To conclude this point; Let us consider whether it were not an intolerable mischief if the Judges should give sentence in causes of instance by the measures of their own fancy, and not by the Laws; who would endure them? and yet why may they not doe that as well as any Ecclesiastic person preach Religion, not which the Laws allow, but what is taught him by his own private Opinion? but he that hath the Laws on his side, hath ever something of true Religion to warrant him, and can never want a great measure of justification. νόμος ὁ καὶ χάρις, the Laws and the customes of the country are the results of wise counsels or long experience; they ever comply with Peace and publick benefit: and nothing of this can be said of private Religions; for they break the Peace, and trouble the Conscience, and undo Government, and despise the Laws, and offend Princes, and dishonour the wisdom of Parliaments, and destroy Obedience.

Well,

Well, but in the last place, if we cannot doe what the Laws command, we will suffer what they impose; and then all is well again. But first, who ever did so that could help it? And secondly, this talking of passive Obedience is but a mockery; for what man did ever say the Laws were not good, but he also said the Punishment was unjust? And thirdly, which of all the Recusants did not endeavour to get ground upon the Laws, and secretly or openly asperse the Authority that put him to pain for doing that which he calls his duty? and can any man boast of his passive Obedience that calls it Persecution? he may think to please himself, but he neither does or saies any thing that is for the reputation of the Laws. Such men are like them that sail in a storm; they may possibly be thrown into a harbour, but they are very sick all the way.

But after all this I have one thing to observe to such persons, That such a passive Obedience as this does not acquit a man before God; and he that suffers what the Law inflicts is not discharg'd in the Court of Conscience, but there he is still a sinner and a debtor. *For the law is not made for the righteous, but*  
for



for sinners ; that is, the punishment appointed by the Law falls on *him only* that hath sinned : but an offending subject cannot *with the fruit of his body* pay for the *sin of his Soul* : when he does evil he must suffer evil ; but if he does not repent besides, a worse thing will happen to him ; for we are not tied to obey only for wrath, but also for Conscience. *Passive obedience* is only the correspondent of *wrath*, but it is the *active obedience* that is required by *Conscience* ; and whatever the Subject suffers for his own fault, it matters nothing as to his Duty, but this also God will exact at the hands of every man that is placed under Authority.

I have now told you the summe of what I had to say concerning Obedience to Laws and to your own Government, and it will be to little purpose to make laws in matter of Religion, or in any thing else, if the end of it be, that every man shall chuse whether he will obey or no : and if it be questioned whether you be deceiv'd or no, though the suffering such a question is a great diminution to your authority, yet it is infinitely more probable that you are in the right then that the disobedient

dient Subject is; because you are conducted with a publick spirit, you have a special title and peculiar portions of the promise of God's assistance, you have all the helps of Counsel and the advantages of deliberation, you have the Scriptures and the Laws, you are as much concerned to judge according to truth as any man, you have the principal of all capacities and states of men to assist your consultations, you are the most concern'd for Peace, and to please God also is your biggest interest: and therefore it cannot be denied to be the most reasonable thing in the world which is set down in the Law: *Præsumptio est pro autoritate imponentis*, the presumption of truth ought to be on your side; and since this is the most likely way for Truth, and the most certain way for Peace, you are to insist in this, and it is not possible to find a better.

I have another part or sense of my Text yet to handle; but because I have no more time of mine own, and I will not take any of yours, I shall only doe it in a short Exhortation to this most Honourable Auditory, and so conclude,

God

God hath put a Royal Mantle, and fastned it with a Golden Clasp, upon the shoulder of the KING, and he hath given you the Judges Robe ; the King holds the Scepter, and he hath now permitted you to touch the golden Ball, and to take it a while into your handling, and made obedience to your Laws to be Duty and Religion: but then remember that the first in every kind is to be the measure of the rest; you cannot reasonably expect that the Subjects should obey you, unless you obey God. I do not speak this only in relation to your personal duty; though in that also it would be consider'd, that all the Bishops and Ministers of Religion are bound to teach the same Doctrines by their Lives as they do by their Sermons; and what *we* are to doe in the matters of *Doctrine*, *you* are also to doe in matter of *Laws*; what is reasonable for the advantages of *Religion*, is also the best Method for the advantages of *Government*; *we* must *preach* by our good Example, and *you* must *govern* by it; and your good example in observing the laws of Religion will strangely endear them to the affections of the people. But I shall rather speak to you as you are in a capacity of

union and of Government; for as now you have a new Power, so there is incumbent upon you a special Duty.

1. Take care that all your power and your counsels be employ'd in doing honour and advantages to Piety and Holiness. Then you obey God in your publick capacity, when by holy Laws and wise administrations you take care that all the Land be an obedient and a religious People. For then you are princely Rulers indeed when you take care of the Salvation of a whole Nation. *Nihil aliud est imperium nisi cura salutis alienæ*, said *Ammianus*; Government is nothing but a care that all men be saved. And therefore take care that men do not destroy their Souls by the abominations of an evil life: see that God be obey'd, take care that the breach of the laws of God may not be unpunished. The best way to make men to be good Subjects to the King is to make them good servants of God. Suffer not Drunkennes to pass with impunity, let Lust find a publick shame. Let the sonnes of the Nobility and Gentry no more dare to dishonour God then the meanest of the people shall: let baseness be basely esteem'd;

ed; that is, put such characters of Shame upon dishonourable Crimes, that it be esteem'd more against the honour of a Gentleman to be drunk then to be kicked, more shame to fornicate then to be can'd: and for honours sake and the reputation of Christianity, take some course that the most unworthy sins of the world have not reputation added to them by being the practice of Gentlemen and persons of good birth and fortunes. Let not them who should be examples of Holiness have an impunity and a licence to provoke God to anger; lest it be said that in *Ireland* it is not lawful for any man to sin, unless he be a person of quality. *Optimus est reipublicæ status, ubi nihil Seneca. deest nisi licentia peccandi*; In a common-wealth that's the best state of things, where every thing can be had but a leave to sin, a licence to be undone.

2. As God is thus to be obey'd, and you are to take care that he be, so God also must be honnour'd, by paying that reverence and religious obedience which is due to those persons whom he hath been pleas'd to honour by admitting them to the dispensation of his blessings, and the ministeries of your Religion.



For certain it is, this is a right way of giving honour and obedience to God. The Church is in some very peculiar manner the *portion* and the *called* and the *care* of God ; and it will concern you in pursuance of your obedience to God, to take care that they in whose hands Religion is to be ministred and conducted, be not discouraged. For what your Judges are to the ministry of Laws, that your Bishops are in the ministeries of Religion ; and it concerns you that the hands of neither of them be made weak : and so long as you make Religion your care, and Holiness your measure, you will not think that Authority is the more to be despised because it is in the hands of the Church, or that it is a sin to *speake evil of dignities*, unless they be Ecclesiastical ; but that they may be reviled, and that though nothing is baser then for a man to be a Thief, yet Sacrilege is no dishonour ; and indeed to be an Oppressor is a great and crying sin, yet to oppress the Church, to diminish her rents, to make her beggerly and contemptible, that's no offence ; and that though it is not lawful to *despise Government*, yet if it be Church-government, that then the case is altered. Take heed  
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of that, for then God is dishonoured, when anything is the more despised by how much it relates nearer unto God. No Religion ever did despise their chiefest Ministers; and the Christian Religion gives them the greatest honour. For honourable Priesthood is like a shower from heaven, it causes blessings every where: but a pitiful, a disheartned, a discouraged Clergy, waters the ground with a water-pot, here and there a little good, and for a little while; but every evil man can destroy all that work whenever he pleases. Take heed; in the world there is not a greater misery can happen to any man, then to be an enemy to God's Church. All Histories of Christendome and the whole Book of God have sad records, and sad threatnings, and sad stories of *Corah*, and *Doeg*, and *Balaam*, and *Jeroboam*, and *Uzzah*, and *Ananias*, and *Sapphira*, and *Julian*, and of Hereticks and Schismatics, and sacrilegious; and after all, these men could not prevail finally, but paid for the mischief they did, and ended their daies in dishonour, and left nothing behind them but the memory of their sin, and the record of their curse.

3. In the same proportion you are to take care of all inferiour Relatives of God and of Religion. Find out methods to relieve the Poor, to accommodate and well dispose of the cures of Souls; let not the Churches lye wast and in ruinous heaps, to the diminution of Religion, and the reproach of the Nation, lest the nations abroad say, that the Britans are a kind of Christians that have no Churches: for Churches, and Courts of Judicature, and the publick defences of an Imperial City, are *res sacrae*; they are venerable in Law, and honourable in Religion.

But that which concerns us most is, that we all keep close to our Religion. *Ad magnas rei-publicæ utilitates retinetur Religio in civitatibus*, said Cicero; by Religion and the strict preserving of it, ye shall best preserve the Interests of the Nation: and according to the precept of the \* Apostle, *Mark them which cause divisions amongst us, contrary to the doctrine that ye have receiv'd, and avoid them*. For I beseech you to consider, all you that are true Protestants; do you not think that your Religion is holy, and Apostolical, and taught by Christ, and pleasing unto God? If you do not think

\* Rom.  
16. 17.

think so, why do you not leave it? but if you do think so, why are ye not zealous for it? Is not the Government a part of? it is that which immures, and adorns, and conducts all the rest, and is establisht in the 36. Article of the Church, in the publick Service-book, and in the book of consecration: it is therefore a part of our Religion, and is not all of it worth preserving? If it be, then they which make Schisms against this Doctrine, by the rule of the Apostle are to be avoided. *Beatus qui prædicat verbum inauditum*, Blessed is he that preaches a word that was never heard before, so said the Spanish Jesuite: but Christ said otherwise, *No man having drunk old wine straight desires new, for he saith the old is better.* And so it is in Religion, *Quod primum verum*, Truth is alwaies first: and since Episcopacy hath been of so lasting an abode, of so long a blessing, since it hath ever combin'd with Government, and hath been taught by that spirit that hath so long dwelt in God's Church, and hath now according to the promise of Jesus, that saies the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church, been restored amongst us by a heap of miracles, and as it went away, so it return'd.

return'd again in the hand of Monarchy, and in the bolome of our Fundamental Laws; suffer no evil tongue to speak against this Truth, which hath had so long a testimony from God, and from Experience, and from the wisdom of so many Ages, of all your Ancestours and all your Laws, lest ye be found to speak against God, and neglect the things that belong unto your Peace, and get nothing by it but news and danger, and what other effects ye know not. But *Leontinus* Bishop of *Antioch* stroak'd his old white beard and said, *When this snow is dissolved, a great deal of dirty weather will follow*; meaning, that when the old Religion should be questioned and discountenanced, the new Religion would bring nothing but trouble and unquietness: and we have found it so by a sad-experience.

4. Ye cannot obey God unless ye doe Justice: for this also is better then sacrifice, said *Solomon*, *Prov.* 21. 3. For Christ, who is *the Sun of righteousness*, is a *Sun and a Shield* to them that doe righteously. The *Indian* was not immured sufficiently by the *Atlantick* sea, nor the *Bosphoran* by the walls of Ice, nor the *Arabian* by his meridian Sun; the Christian Justice of  
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the *Romane* Princes brake through all inclosures, and by Justice set up Christs standard, and gave to all the world a testimony how much could be done by Prudence and Valour, when they were conducted by the hands of Justice. And now you will have a great trial of this part of your Obedience to God.

For you are to give sentence in the causes of half a Nation: and he had need be a wise and a good man that divides the inheritance amongst Brethren; that he may not be abused by contrary pretences, nor biassed by the Interest of friends, nor transported with the unjust thoughts even of a just Revenge, nor allured by the opportunities of Spoile, nor turn'd aside by Partiality in his own concerns, nor blinded by Gold, which puts out the eyes of wise men, nor couzened by pretended Zeal, nor wearied with the difficulty of questions, nor directed by a general measure in cases not measurable by it, nor born down by Prejudice, nor abused by resolutions taken before the cause be heard, nor over-ruled by National Interests. For Justice ought to be the simplest thing in the world, and is to be measured by nothing but by Truth and by

Laws and by the decrees of Princes. But whatever you doe; let not the pretence of a different Religion make you think it lawful to oppresse any man in his just rights. For Opinions are not, but Laws only, and *doing as we would be done to*, are the measures of Justice: and though Justice does alike to all men, Jew and Christian, Lutheran and Calvinist; yet to doe right to them that are of another Opinion is the way to win them; but if you for Conscience sake doe them wrong, they will hate you and your Religion.

Lastly, as *obedience is better then sacrifice*, so God also said, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*; meaning that Mercy is the best Obedience. *Perierat totum quod Deus fecerat, nisi misericordia subvenisset*, said *Chrysologus*; all the creatures both of heaven and earth would perish, if Mercy did not relieve us all. Other good things, more or less, every man expects according to the portion of his fortune: *Ex clementia omnes idem sperant*, \* but from Mercy and Clemency all the world alike do expect advantages. And which of us all stands here this day, that does not need God's pardon and the King's? Surely no man is so much pleased with

\* Seneca.

with his own innocence, as that he will be willing to quit his claim to Mercy: and if we all need it, let us all shew it.

*Naturæ imperio gemimus, cum funus adultæ  
Virginis occurrit, vel terrâ clauditur infans,  
Et minor igne rogi——*

If you do but see a Maiden carried to her grave a little before her intended marriage, or an Infant dye before the birth of Reason, Nature hath taught us to pay a tributary tear: Alas! your eyes will behold the ruine of many Families, which though they sadly have deserved, yet Mercy is not delighted with the spectacle; and therefore God places a watry cloud in the eye, that when the light of heaven shines upon it, it may produce a rain-bow to be a Sacrament and a memorial that God and the sons of God do not love to see a man perish. God never rejoyces in the death of him that dies; and we also esteem it undecent to have Musick at a Funeral. And as Religion teaches us to pity a condemned Criminal, so Mercy intercedes for the most benign interpretation of the Laws. You must indeed be as just as the Laws, and you must be as merciful as your

*Religion*: and you have no way to tie these together, but to follow the pattern in the Mount; doe as God does, who in judgement remembers mercy.

To conclude; If every one in this Honourable Assembly would joyn together to promote Christian Religion in it's true notion, that is, Peace and Holiness, the Love of God and the Love of our Brother, Christianity in all its proper usefulness, and would not indure in the Nation any thing against the laws of the Holy *Jesus*; if they were all zealous for the doctrines of Righteousness, and impatient of Sin in your selves and in the people, it is not to be imagined what a happy Nation we should be. But if ye divide into parties, and keep up useles differences of names or interests; if ye do not joyn in the bands of Peace, that is, the King, and the Church, Religion, and the good of the Nation, you can never hope to see a blessing to be the end of your labours. Remember the words of Solomon, *Righteousness exalteth a Nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*: but when Righteousness is advanced in the hearts and lives of the Nation, who shall dare to reprove your Faith?

Faith ? who can find fault with your Religion ?

God of his mercy grant that in all your Consultations the Word of God may be your measure, the Spirit of God may be your guide, and the glory of God may be your end: He of his mercy grant that Moderation may be your limit, and Peace may be within your walls as long as you are there, and in all the Land for ever after. But remember, that since the honour and service of his Majesty, and the peace and prosperity of the Church, the perpetuity of our fundamental Laws, publick Justice, and the honour of all legal Authority, the advancement of Trade and the wealth of the Nation is your design, remember, I pray, what warranty you have to expect all this; no less then the words of our Blessed Saviour, but it is upon these terms, *Seek ye first the Kingdome of God, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.* Amen.

F I N I S.